A brief guide to help those living within the Wildlife Trust area with an interest in vascular plants to develop their skills by attending courses, joining societies & groups, attending field meetings and teaching themselves.

WORKSHOPS & COURSES
The following organisations run workshops and short courses in plant identification, plant habitat studies and plant recording, amongst other subjects:

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire
Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton, NN3 8BE Tel: 01604 774031 Fax: 01604 784835 trainingworkshops@wildlifebcn.org  http://www.wildlifebcn.org/trainingworkshops

Cambridge University Botanic Garden
The Education Office, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge, CB2 1JE Tel: 01223 331875, education@botanic.cam.ac.uk  http://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk

Field Studies Council
Head office, Preston Montford, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, SY4 1HW Tel: 01743 852100 Fax: 01743 852101 enquiries@field-studies-council.org These courses are residential and based at centres around the country.  http://www.field-studies-council.org

Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (see organisation details below)
The BSBI runs an on-line Plant Identification Course for beginners in serious botany, with a concessionary rate for volunteers. See https://identiplant.co.uk/identwp19/ for more details.

Workers’ Educational Association  Short multi-part courses on a wide variety of subjects including wildlife, ecology, plants; available in local venues throughout the country.  https://www.wea.org.uk/

A number of other centres and organisations round the country run courses on similar subjects.

SOCIETIES & GROUPS
The following organisations arrange field meetings and/or some indoor lectures about British plants which are open to members and visitors/non-members and where informal learning can take place:

Bedfordshire Natural History Society
Hon. Membership Secretary  Mary Sheridan, 28 Chestnut Hill, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 7TR 01525 378245 membership@bnhs.org.uk  http://www.bnhs.org.uk/

Huntingdonshire Fauna & Flora Society
Hon. Membership Secretary  Stuart Irons, 4 Appleyard, Stanground, Peterborough, PE2 8JH nebria@ntlworld.com  http://www.shotbolt.com/hffs/index.htm

Cambridge Natural History Society
Membership Secretary, Hilary Pounsett, 78 Stanley Road, Cambridge, CB5 8LB membership@cnhs.org.uk  http://www.cnhs.org.uk/

Kettering and District Natural History Society
http://kdnhs.org.uk/Kettering-And-District-Natural-History-Society/

Northamptonshire Natural History Society
The Humfrey Rooms, 10 Castilian Terrace, Northampton, NN1 1LD  01604 602242  http://www.nnhs.info/index.php

The Wild Flower Society
The Wildflower Society Membership Secretary, 43 Roebuck Road, Rochester, ME1 1UE wildflowermembership@yahoo.co.uk  http://www.thewildflowersociety.com/
Friends of Cambridge University Botanic Garden
The Friends' Office, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE
Tel/Fax: 01223 336271  friends@botanic.cam.ac.uk
https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/join-support/friends-of-cubg/

University of the Third Age in Cambridge - Botany Group
First Floor, 27-28 Bridge Street, Cambridge, CB2 1UJ 01223 321587 (office open 10am-2pm, Mon-Fri). To attend lectures and field trips you need to join U3AC and therefore no longer be in full-time employment. Botany Group queries to: Dr Pam Newman  pamela.newman77@yahoo.co.uk
General U3AC e-mail: office@u3ac.org.uk  http://www.u3ac.org.uk/

Bedfordshire Flora Group
This is a group of keen amateurs who are working to provide data for a national atlas to be published by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland in 2020. They are hoping to recruit new members with any level of experience, the only prerequisite being enthusiasm. Instruction and encouragement will be given. Details from vice-county recorder John Wakeley (contact details below).

Cambridgeshire Flora Group
An informal group actively recording the flora of the old county of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Roughly monthly excursions mostly at the weekend, April to Sept/Oct, to record plants in sites all over old Cambs; also many other opportunities and ways to contribute to the production of the national atlas and general recording. Contact vice-county recorder (contact details below).

Fenland Flora
Fieldwork is ongoing to produce a flora of the Fenland basin across several counties/vice-counties. Organisers are Owen Mountford and Jon Graham: om@ceh.ac.uk  jonathan.graham@ntlworld.com
https://bsbi.org/fenland

Northamptonshire Flora Group
In 2013 this group published an update to the 1995 flora. They are currently recording for the New Atlas with the intention of covering the whole of the vice-county by 2020. Organised by the BSBI vice-county recorder, Alyson Freeman (contact details below).

PLANT RECORDING
Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI)
Membership is open to all with an interest in the British and Irish vascular plant and stonewort floras. The Society organises a programme of excursions every year, a number specifically for beginners. The Society's website provides a wide and increasing range of useful botanical resources including a distribution mapping section. The Society also provides a network of referees to deal with members' queries regarding identification of difficult plant groups and other subjects. Members of the society benefit from substantial discounts on many botanical books, esp. at pre-publication stage.
https://bsbi.org/

The vice-county recorders receive, verify and collate plant records for their respective areas; submit records to national recording schemes; and endeavour to co-ordinate plant recording in their area.

Cambridgeshire (excluding Hunts) vc 29: Jonathan Shanklin, 11 City Road, Cambridge CB1 1DP  jdsh@bas.ac.uk  See also the recorders' webpage at https://legacy.bas.ac.uk/met/jds/cnhs/vc29.htm

Bedfordshire vc 30: John Wakeley, Swan House, Dodford, Northampton, NN7 4SX  vetjw@btinternet.com or flora@bnhs.org.uk

Huntingdonshire vc 31: David Broughton, 1 Margate, Woodlesford, Leeds, LS26 8PB  da_broughton@tiscali.co.uk  https://bsbi.org/huntingdonshire

Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough vc 32: Alyson Freeman and Brian Laney  Contact alysonfreeman0@gmail.com  https://bsbi.org/northamptonshire
INFORMATION RESOURCES - BOOKS & JOURNALS

**National identification guides with illustrations** (a small selection of some of the better amongst the very many available)


*The Wild Flower Key.* Francis Rose & Clare O’Reilly. Frederick Warne (Publishers) Ltd, London. First published 1981, Revised edition 2006. 576 pp.,190×130 mm. An illustrated guide with keys to most groups; includes some 1600 species. Includes only a few common grasses, sedges and rushes. NB. The revised edition contained a large number of printing errors; errata can be found on the BSBI website publications page.


*A useful summary of illustrated guides recommended for beginners by Philip Oswald (U3A Cambridge)* can be found here: [https://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/Taxon_Field_guides_-_Oswald-.pdf](https://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/Taxon_Field_guides_-_Oswald-.pdf)

**National identification guides largely un-illustrated**


*Flora of the British Isles.* A.R.Clapham, T.G.Tutin & D.M.Moore. (1987). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [currently out of print] (earlier editions: A.R.Clapham, T.G.Tutin & E.F.Warburg. 1952, 1962). For native vascular plants, each has its strengths and weaknesses. Both have detailed keys, neither has any colour pictures, and few black and white drawings (both) or photographs (Stace only). Stace is much more up-to-date (indeed, it has become a standard source for plant names) and incorporates the new molecular system of classification based on DNA analysis; he tackles certain ‘difficult’ groups better than any previous single volume book, often with new illustrations; he is never afraid to use small features (even those requiring a microscope) if these are the most reliable. ‘CTM’ (alias ‘CTW’) provide more thorough descriptions, which can be very handy if parts of a plant (e.g. flowers, fruits) are missing (but see Vegetative Key below). Their keys often use easier characters and are more comfortably laid out. For non-native plants Stace has to be used because he includes over a thousand extra species, mainly casuals from food, gardens etc., and is far more reliable and up-to-date on the distribution and origins of aliens.


**Other guides**

The BSBI publishes a range of more specialised books for the botanist, notably the Handbook series which covers groups such as Sedges & allies, Umbellifers, Docks & Knotweeds, Willows & Poplars, Crucifers, Roses, Pondweeds, Dandelions, Water-starworts, Fumitories and Grasses. BSBI also publishes the *Plant Crib*, a very useful book giving detailed guidance on identification of problem plant groups using descriptions, keys, tables and line drawings (also available as pdf from BSBI website).

*The Vegetative Key to the British Flora* J.Poland & E.Clements. BSBI/John Poland, Southampton, 2009. Radically different to most/all preceding floras; almost wholly composed of a hierarchy of different keys with many line drawings of small details such as leaf venation & shape, leaf/stem cross-sections, hair type/shape and also a small number of colour illustrations. Most of the keys are entirely artificial so completely unrelated plants can appear next to each other; there are also some 80 pages of keys devoted to various taxonomic groups. With this book many specimens that were formerly unnameable can now be determined with confidence.
National distribution and ecology

*New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora.* C.D.Preston, D.A.Pearman, T.D.Dines. Oxford University Press, 2002 National distribution plotted at 10km square resolution; together with brief descriptions of the status of each species, their habitats, distribution/range, trends, etc. An accompanying CD allows data to be queried in a variety of ways, including comparison of species distribution with geophysical and climatic factors. See also BSBI website.

Local distribution floras, checklists and rare plant registers

*Flora of Bedfordshire*  Christopher R.Boon and Alan R. Outen. Bedfordshire Natural History Society, 2011. A large format (3.5kg), full-colour flora with colour-coded tetrad dot maps for most species, allowing comparison with distributions recorded in earlier floras. Itemised records for scarcer species. Analyses of change, including re-survey of John Dony’s Habitat Studies for his 1953 Flora. Many excellent photos and paintings of species. Also covers bryophytes..

*Flora of Cambridgeshire*  Alan Leslie, RHS, 2019. A hefty volume composed mainly of text accounts of the 2300 or so species and hybrids recorded in the old county of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Usual introductory material on geology, climate, plant recorders in the county, etc. Accounts of selected areas of special botanical interest. Unlike most recent floras there are no maps showing distribution of individual species. As in the 1964 flora distribution for a taxon is given as a list of 10km squares after each account. *Cambridgeshire Flora Records since 1538.* Gigi Crompton. An on-line catalogue of vascular plant records in Cambridge and the Isle of Ely (vc 29): *Part 1 Nationally Rare, Nationally Scarce, Locally Rare species. Part 2 Alien species. Part 3 Other species.* http://www.cambridgeshireflora.com/ The vice-county recorders’ webpage provides a number of useful vice-county plant lists and a Rare Plant Register.

*The Flora of Northamptonshire & the Soke of Peterborough*  Gill Gent & Rob Wilson. Robert Wilson Designs, 2013. With descriptions of county climate, geology, soils, landscape etc. and a discussion of change and its causes in the local flora. Systematic flora with short species accounts of over 1800 species. Distribution of 600 species mapped at tetrad level with the 1995 5km square distribution also shown. The *Flora Checklist and Rare Plant Register* can be downloaded from the BSBI website county page: https://bsbi.org/northamptonshire

*The Flora of Huntingdonshire and the Soke of Peterborough*  Terry C.E.Wells. Published by Huntingdonshire Fauna & Flora Society and T.C.E.Wells, 2003. ISBN 0-9514427-2-4. Mainly comprising tetrad distribution maps with short species accounts. The majority of the recording effort was made prior to 1989. The very useful *Checklist of the Flora of Huntingdonshire* (vc31) and Rare Plant Register are available to download from the county page on the BSBI website. https://bsbi.org/huntingdonshire

Local journals on natural history

*Nature in Cambridgeshire.* An annual journal devoted to the natural history of the former county of Cambridgeshire; more recent editions have widened their scope to include some material relating to current administrative Cambridgeshire. It contains a digest of the year’s most interesting and important plant records in vc29. Copies and back copies may be obtained by writing to Nature in Cambridgeshire, c/o Mark Hill, 11 Chaucer Road, Cambridge, CB2 7EB or info@natureincambridgeshire.org.uk. http://www.natureincambridgeshire.org.uk/

*Huntingdonshire Fauna & Flora Society Annual Report.* An annual journal containing reports from the society’s recorders and articles on the natural history of the former county of Huntingdonshire together with Peterborough. The annual review of recent plant records covers Hunts only. Copies and back copies may be obtained from Hon. Membership Secretary Stuart Irons, 4 Appleyard, Stanground, Peterborough, PE2 8JH nebria@ntlworld.com

*Bedfordshire Naturalist.* An annual journal produced by Bedfordshire Natural History Society. Part 1 covers plants and fauna other than birds. The current issue may be obtained from the Hon. Membership Secretary, Mary Sheridan, 28 Chestnut Hill, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 7TR Tel: 01525 378245